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was quartered, and he walked among the cars, trying to find those donated by Uncle Percy and discover how they were holding up. Each car had a plate bearing the donor's name; but, unfortunately, the plates were so plastered with mud that Oliver could not make out any of the names. In the course of his inspection he came upon Carter, the boy who had crossed with him. Carter was strangely engaged.

"Hello," said Carter. "How are you making out? They gave me a new car to-night, and I'm getting it ready."

And he stooped, seized a handful of mud, and began to plaster it over the plate bearing the name of the donor.

"What on earth are you doing?" Oliver inquired.

"I'm erasing the name of the gracious gentleman who gave us this car," the boy said. "We do it to all of them—it's by way of a christening. You don't suppose I'd go out there on the firing line with this libel on our generosity gleaming in the sun, do you?"

Oliver stared at him. Over them hung a calm and placid moon, lighting that little square where a hundred worn automobiles were parked. The windows in the buildings all about were dark and sinister—all save those in the city hall, where men in agony were fighting for their lives.

"I don't understand," said Oliver.

Carter's face seemed old and haggard in the moonlight.

"If you and your bunch understood," he said, "there wouldn't be any plates; and I shouldn't have to wallow in this mud."

Oliver said afterward that Carter was a queer fish.

TWO days later Oliver was admitted to the company of the men who killed. On a glorious winter afternoon, with the sun a faint yellow above him, he took

part in a raid on a railway station back of the enemy's lines. He had five bombs, and he landed them all before the planes of the enemy put him to flight. It was exhilarating to fly there in the blue sky, to watch the insects below him scurry in terror at his approach, to feel that he had done his duty well.

He was commended for bravery by his captain. And indeed he was brave—but not especially worthy of praise for it. For he was utterly lacking in imagination; he could not picture death.

FOR more than a month he served faithfully and well. Then, returning one evening from an inspection of the enemy's lines, he met over the trenches of his own side a German plane. He knew his duty, and he did it. The German fired first, and caught Oliver in the left shoulder. Oliver showed his mettle then. Still keeping a firm control of his machine, he fired and brought the German down.

When he himself had landed safely, Oliver went over and looked at his vanquished foe. He saw a handsome blond boy who might have been in his own club; he noticed, too, that he wore a wedding ring. For a moment Oliver felt a trifle faint; then they began to crowd around him.

They dressed the wound in Oliver's shoulder and sent him back to Paris to recover. He read in the order of the day that he was down to receive the Cross of War.

Uncle Percy was not in the French capital when Oliver got there. He had returned to London—presumably to stand in the street forlorn before his clubs. But with the news of Oliver's exploit he wrote joyfully that he was received everywhere again, and that he was a proud man.

Paris was lonely. Coolidge had gone back to the States; so had most of

Oliver's other friends. In the street one day he met Helen Ferris. She was quite pale and said little, except that she had made a horrible mistake and was sailing for home the next day. Oliver, always tactful, asked her how she liked hospital work. She walked away from him, not speaking, a kind of dumb terror in her eyes.

SPRING had come. The trees along the Champs Élysées were green again; in the Tuileries flowers were blooming. But Oliver, who had known other springs in Paris, was the more depressed. This was so different. No more happy luncheons in the restaurants of the Bois; no more lazy afternoons under the gay sidewalk awnings of the boulevard cafés. The city was tense, waiting for the end. It felt now that the end would be good, but through what seas of blood must it yet pass?

Daily Oliver grew more dispirited. He remembered that at home tennis and golf had come again. He began to long for his own country, for the peace of it. The result was that he applied for his discharge from the aviation corps, and got it.

Two nights before he left, a woman friend of his mother gave him a farewell dinner in her apartment; and there he met the lovely daughter of the Count de Virney. His mother's friend had told him that the Count's daughter had expressed a desire to meet him, to thank him for France. And when Oliver saw the girl he thrilled.

She was fair, slim, vivacious despite the cloud of sorrow in her eyes. Once he had seen her, Oliver told himself that to sail for home two days later was impossible. Her smiles were all for Oliver; the dinner was the most perfect he could remember. And after it was over, on a balcony that looked out on the Seine, she tried to tell him what was in her heart.

"You will never understand," she said softly, "what your coming and the coming of others like you has meant to us over here. Though we never sought your aid, you knew and understood. When the horrible flood broke over our borders, you, thousands of miles away, safe beyond the sea—you thrilled at the suffering of France. To offer one's life for one's own country, that is only duty; to offer it for another country, that is splendid, that is beautiful."

"Pardon me," said Oliver. Suddenly, and for almost the first time in his life, he felt horribly uncomfortable. "You're quite wrong; you don't understand—"

"You know what this war has meant to me and mine," the girl went on. "We do not often speak of it, but my two brothers fell in the battle of the Marne. One—he was a hundred feet in advance of his regiment—and the bayonets—" She covered her face with her hands, then looked up proudly. "I love to feel that it is because they died that Paris is Paris to-night."

"You have been wonderful—you French," cried Oliver. "Please don't speak of me the way you have. You've got me all wrong. I'm ashamed to say it, but you ought to know the truth. Old Ben Coolidge wrote me a letter—"

"You would be modest—yes," the girl said. "I understand. But when I heard of what you had done—you, the friend of my friend—I said I must come here to-night. Without my family, alone, as girls do in your country—is it not so?—I resolved to come here and to thank you for France. You—"

"No," cried Oliver, very warm and unhappy. "You mustn't—you don't understand. Old Ben Coolidge wrote me a letter—that's all. He said all the fellows were over here. I had nothing else on—so I came. Don't you see how it was? I came to be with the bunch."

The girl stared at him with wide eyes. "I—I do not believe it, monsieur," she said.

"But it's true," said Oliver miserably. "Old Ben wrote the letter—"

"Tell me—" She stood very straight and solemn in the moonlight. "If your friends had been—on the other side—"

"Oh, but they wouldn't," said Oliver. "We've had a lot of good times in Paris. Of course they'd all be on this side—"

"But if they had not—" "I—I don't know, really," stammered Oliver. "I wanted to be with the bunch—"

The girl turned away from him. He waited, breathless.

"Forgive me if I am rude," she said. "Monsieur—you have killed for a sport. There is a word in your language to describe it—a very ugly word. I will go now—lest I speak it."

She stepped through the window, and Oliver was left alone on the balcony. For a time he stood, wounded, unhappy, and gazed out over the darkened city. Into his mind came the memory of many things he had witnessed since coming to this stricken country—a mighty pageant of sorrow. A great shame filled his heart.

When he went inside, the daughter of the Count de Virney was gone.

OLIVER sailed for home on the appointed day. There was some disposition on the ship to make a hero of him, but it met with no encouragement from him. Finally he came again to Boston, and on the evening of the day of his arrival he found himself alone with his mother in the library.

"Did you see Agatha to-day?" his mother asked.

"No," said Oliver briefly.

"Agatha is very much wrought up about the war." His mother smiled slightly. "She is collecting money to buy mouth organs for the soldiers in the trenches."

"Huh," said Oliver.

"I met Ben Coolidge last week," went on Mrs. Winterslip. "He told me you were having a bully time over there. I think those were the words he used." She paused, waiting for Oliver to speak; but he said nothing. "Oliver," she went on, "was it true? Did you have—a bully time?"

"No, I did not," said Oliver. He came and stood by her chair. "I started out all right—but at the end I woke up. I woke up to myself, and to Coolidge—to the whole empty-headed bunch of us who had gone over there because it was a popular thing to do. Oh, some of the fellows know why they're over there—a fellow named Carter; I met him on the boat. But the rest—It's great sport—for the rest. And I was one of them. Mother," he said, "you must have known—why did you let me make a fool of myself?"

"Because I hoped," smiled his mother, her eyes shining. "And all that I hoped for seems to have happened. Tell me, Oliver, just how it happened."

"There was a French girl," said Oliver. "Rather beautiful, too. Wonderful eyes. She told me what I was—told me plainly, though she didn't use the word."

He was silent for a moment.

"Next Monday," he said, "I'm going back to New York. I've got a job doing relief work there—fifty a month it pays, and the money goes back into the treasury of the association. I shall miss all the tennis, of course—and the work isn't very spectacular; but I want to square myself—"

"With—the French girl?" asked his mother.

"If it isn't too late," he said. "Anyhow—with you—with myself. And when that's ended—I'm going to ask father to take me back at the office. I'll really try, this time."

He stooped and kissed her.

"I think now I'll take a little walk," he said. "I want to—think."

He went out. His mother heard the outer door close behind him. She sat at the window, gazing out at that well-bred river that flows to a historic harbor. She was a happy woman. For the son she had hoped for, had dreamed of, seemed to be hers at last.